

CITY COUNCIL  
ATLANTA, GEORGIA

AN ORDINANCE

BY COUNCILMEMBER FELICIA MOORE

03-0-0313

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE PENSION LAWS APPLICABLE TO FIREFIGHTERS OF THE CITY OF ATLANTA SO AS TO INCREASE THE MONTHLY PENSION BENEFIT OF OFFICERS WHERE A DETERMINATION HAS BEEN MADE BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE FIREFIGHTERS PENSION FUND THAT AN OFFICER HAS BECOME DISABLED AS A RESULT OF A CATASTROPHIC INJURY RECEIVED IN THE LINE OF DUTY; TO PROVIDE THAT SAID ORDINANCE SHALL BE RETROACTIVE; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

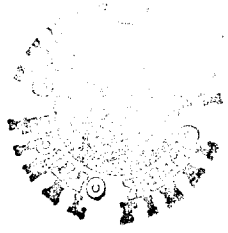
WHEREAS, it is in the best interest of the city to provide the finest and most supportive pension benefits to the city's firefighters that it can afford; and

WHEREAS, it is also in the best interest of the city to use firefighter pension benefits as a tool by which to attract qualified applicants for unfilled firefighter positions as well as to retain current firefighters in their present positions; and

WHEREAS, the current pension laws of the City of Atlanta do not address the situation of adequate benefits regarding catastrophic injuries in the line of duty.

**THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ATLANTA, GEORGIA HEREBY ORDAINS AS FOLLOWS:**

**Section 1:** Georgia Laws 1924, p. 167, particularly as amended by Georgia Laws 1978, p. 4508 (and as has been further amended) and codified at section 6-367, Related Laws Section of Volume I, City Charter and Code (Firefighters Pension Fund) is hereby amended by providing that any City of Atlanta firefighter who



receives a catastrophic injury in the line of duty, will receive 100% of the top salary for the grade and position that he/she occupied at the time of his/her injury.

**Section 2:** The determination of whether a disability is catastrophic shall be in the sole discretion of the board by a preponderance of the evidence and as supported by official medical records, qualified medical expert opinions, sworn testimony and/or other such reliable source accepted by the board in its discretion. For the purposes of this Code Section, a catastrophic injury is a sudden, violent, life-threatening injury sustained by a member who is or was employed as a sworn employee by the City at the time of the injury, which injury is due to an externally-caused event or events, as supported by evidence, including, but not specifically limited to, one of the conditions described below: (1) loss of sight in one or both eyes; (2) loss of one or both feet at or above the ankle; (3) loss of one or both hands at or above the wrist; (4) an injury to the spine that results in permanent and complete paralysis of both arms, both legs, or one arm and one leg, or; (5) an externally caused traumatic physical injury to the brain or skull that renders one physically or mentally unable to perform two or more Activities of Daily Living (feeding oneself, dressing, continence, bathing, toileting and transferring, i.e. getting in and out of bed), driving a motor vehicle, etc. or catastrophically disabled includes a permanent severely disabling injury or disorder that compromises the ability to carry out the activities of daily living to such a degree that the individual requires personal or mechanical assistance to leave home or bed or requires constant supervision to avoid physical harm to self or others.



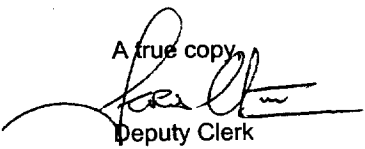
**Section 3:** This ordinance shall be retroactive and those persons who have received catastrophic injuries in the line of duty, while employed as City of Atlanta officer or employee, shall be eligible for review and adjustment of their pension in accordance with this section.

**Section 4:** The Chief Financial Officer of the City of Atlanta shall identify any and all funding required to implement this ordinance.

**Section 5:** As expressed and referenced in Resolution 01-R-1940, Adopted on November 19, 2001 (see attached), it is the intent of the City Council to increase the monthly benefit of Firefighters as it relates to catastrophic injury, to provide that the eligibility for said increased monthly pension benefit shall be retroactive, but that the payment of said benefit shall be prospective from the effective date of the passage of an ordinance providing for such benefit, and also as referenced in Ordinance 01-O-0976, Adopted on September 17, 2001 (see attached) where the definition of catastrophic injury is contained.

**Section 6:** All ordinances, or parts of ordinances in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

A true copy,

  
Deputy Clerk

**ADOPTED** as amended by Council  
**APPROVED** by the Mayor

May 16, 2005  
May 23, 2005



CITY COUNCIL  
ATLANTA, GEORGIA

Committee Paper  
11/14/01

01- R-1940

A RESOLUTION BY  
FINANCE/EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE


A RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE INTENT OF THE CITY COUNCIL TO AMEND THE PENSION LAWS APPLICABLE TO THE POLICE OFFICERS OF THE CITY OF ATLANTA SO AS TO INCREASE THE MONTHLY PENSION BENEFIT OF OFFICERS WHERE A DETERMINATION HAS BEEN MADE BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE POLICE OFFICERS PENSION FUND THAT AN OFFICER HAS BECOME DISABLED AS A RESULT OF A CATASTROPHIC INJURY **AS DEFINED BY ORDINANCE 01-O-0976** RECEIVED IN THE LINE OF DUTY; TO PROVIDE THAT THE ELIGIBILITY FOR SAID INCREASED MONTHLY PENSION BENEFIT SHALL BE RETROACTIVE, BUT THAT THE PAYMENT OF SAID BENEFIT SHALL BE PERSPECTIVE FROM THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF THE PASSAGE OF AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR SUCH BENEFIT; TO FUND THE COSTS OF SAID BENEFIT IN THE APPROXIMATE AMOUNT OF \$400,000 FROM THE 2002 CITY OF ATLANTA BUDGET AND SUCH ADDITIONAL AMOUNTS AS MAY BE NECESSARY AND REQUIRED TO FUND THE CONTINUATION OF SAID BENEFIT IN SUBSEQUENT BUDGET YEARS; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

WHEREAS, it is in the best interest of the city to provide the finest and most supportive pension benefits to the city's law enforcement officers that it can afford; and

WHEREAS, it is also in the best interest of the city to use police pension benefits as a tool by which to attract qualified applicants for the many unfilled police positions as well as to retain current law enforcement officers in their present positions; and

WHEREAS, the current pension laws of the City of Atlanta do not address the situation of adequate benefits regarding catastrophic injuries received in the line of duty.

**THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ATLANTA, GEORGIA HEREBY RESOLVES** as follows:



**Section 1:** The City Council hereby expresses its intent to amend the pension laws applicable to the police officers of the City of Atlanta so as to increase the monthly pension benefit of police officers where a determination has been made by the Board of Trustees of the Police Officers Pension Fund that an officer has become disabled as a result of a catastrophic injury received in the line of duty; to provide that the eligibility for said increased monthly pension benefit shall be retroactive, but the payment of said benefit shall be perspective from the effective date of the passage of an ordinance providing for such benefit; to fund the costs of said benefit in the approximate amount of \$400,000 from the 2002 City of Atlanta budget and such additional amounts as may be necessary and required to fund the continuation of said benefit in subsequent budget years.

**Section 2.** The Chief Financial Officer of the City of Atlanta shall identify any and all funding required to implement this resolution, and shall include said amount in the 2002 City of Atlanta budget.

**Section 3.** All resolutions or parts of resolutions in conflict herewith are hereby rescinded.

A true copy,

  
Municipal Clerk, CMC

ADOPTED as amended by the Council  
APPROVED by the Mayor

NOV 19, 2001  
NOV 27, 2001

AN ORDINANCE

BY COUNCILMEMBER MICHAEL J. BOND

TO AMEND SECTION 6-222 OF THE CITY OF ATLANTA'S CODE OF ORDINANCES RELATED LAWS SECTION (1978 PENSION ACT) BY REPEALING EXISTING PROVISIONS GOVERNING POLICE PENSION BOARD POLICY ON EMPLOYMENT RESTRICTIONS FOR PENSIONED OFFICERS SEVERLY INJURED IN THE LINE OF DUTY AND SUBSTITUTING IN LIEU THEREOF THE ARTICLE CONTAINED HEREIN; TO REPEAL CONFLICTING ORDINANCES; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

WHEREAS, the City of Atlanta recognizes that the duties and responsibilities of its sworn police officers are inherently dangerous and require its officers to routinely place themselves in harm's way in the performance of their duties; and

WHEREAS, the City of Atlanta provides reasonable accommodation to police officers who are otherwise qualified for sworn positions, consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. § 14001, et seq.); and


WHEREAS, there are some officers who have suffered such severe or catastrophic injuries, making them unable to return to sworn status; and

WHEREAS, the current police disability provisions do not allow for distinctions between mild, moderate, and severe/catastrophic injuries; and

WHEREAS, the City of Atlanta supports the goal of providing a disability plan for its officers that accommodates a range of injury levels; and

WHEREAS, such severely or catastrophically injured officers are therefore only able to receive a disability pension; and

WHEREAS, the City of Atlanta respects its responsibilities to prevent and avoid contributing to the financial harm experienced by its police officers who are severely injured in the line of duty; and



**WHEREAS**, the current law precludes such pensioned officer from supplementing his or her disability benefits through any form of gainful employment, which results in due economic consequences to the officer and the officers family; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Atlanta has not updated or significantly revised its disability and pension provisions since 1978 and recognizes the need to accommodate the changes in the law and in medical technology; and

**WHEREAS**, jurisdictions outside of the City of Atlanta have implemented and/or modified their provisions to provide work eligibility for its officers who have been severely injured in the line of duty and who have, therefore, been "pensioned"; and

**WHEREAS**, City of Atlanta Police Officers who are severely injured in the line of duty during the early period of their service are inadvertently penalized based upon the current plan for compensation; and

**WHEREAS**, providing financial protection in the event of serious injury sustained in the line of duty will serve to motivate and promote improved morale among current City of Atlanta police officers and aid in the recruitment and retention of qualified law enforcement personnel in the future; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Atlanta recognizes that the opportunity or such officers to pursue alternative employment after suffering a permanent and catastrophic, on the job injury is fundamental to recouping self esteem and human dignity; and

**WHEREAS**, prior to the 1986 Amendment, the City of Atlanta pension and disability provisions did allow an injured employee to seek and, upon approval, obtain eligibility for other employment;

**THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ATLANTA GEORGIA HEREBY ORDAINS AS FOLLOWS:**

**SECTION 1.**

That the current ordinance governing the policies of the City of Atlanta's Pension Board, entitled "1978 Pension Act," City of Atlanta Code of Ordinances, Related Laws Section 6-222 (g) be amended to add a new subsection which shall be identified as Section 6-222 (g)(8), and which shall read as follows:

**(g) (8) Catastrophic Disability Sustained In The Line Of Duty.** A sworn employee who has been injured in the line of duty, and whose permanent injury is severe or catastrophic, may make an application to the board through the City of Atlanta Department of Finance, Division of Employee Benefits. The Board is thereafter

authorized to make a finding, by a simple majority vote, that such in the line of duty injury is catastrophic such that the employee is disabled. In connection therewith:

a. The determination of whether a disability was incurred "In The Line Of Duty" or "Not In The Line Of Duty" shall be made by the board in accordance with the board of trustees' investigation procedures as provided in subsection (n) hereof, below.

b. The determination of whether a disability is catastrophic shall be in the sole discretion of the board by a preponderance of the evidence and as supported by official medical records, qualified medical expert opinions, sworn testimony and/or other such reliable source accepted by the board in its discretion. For the purposes of this Code Section, a catastrophic injury is a sudden, violent, life-threatening, injury sustained by a member who is or was employed as a sworn employee by the City at the time of the injury, which injury is due to an externally-caused event or events, as supported by evidence, including, but not specifically limited to, one of the conditions described below: (1) loss of sight in one or both eyes;(2) loss of one or both feet at or above the ankle;(3) loss of one or both hands at or above the wrist;(4) an injury to the spine that results in permanent and complete paralysis of both arms, both legs, or one arm and one leg, or;(5) an externally caused traumatic physical injury to the brain or skull that renders one physically or mentally unable to perform **two or more Activities of Daily Living (feeding oneself, dressing, continence, bathing, toileting and transferring, i.e. getting in and out of bed), driving a motor vehicle, etc. or catastrophically disabled includes a permanent severely disabling injury, disorder, that compromises the ability to carry out the activities of daily living to such a degree that the individual requires personal or mechanical assistance to leave home or bed or requires constant supervision to avoid physical harm to self or others.**

c. Upon a finding by the board that an officer or employee covered by the provisions of this Act meets the criteria under this subsection, the officer or employee covered by the provisions of this Act shall be entitled to receive compensation or other income from third-party sources while receiving disability pension payments and/or other benefits without suffering any penalty or otherwise forfeiting or waiving any right to continue receiving disability pension benefits the officer or employee would otherwise be entitled to receive pursuant to the pension plan.

d. Should any individual or department of the City having an interest in the board's decision pursuant to this subsection disagree with such decision of the board, then such department may appeal from such decision as provided in subsection (n), hereof, below, and as otherwise provided by law.

e. Any finding by the board that an individual meets the criteria of this subsection shall be subject to periodic review in accordance with subsection (g)(7)a, and any such finding may be rescinded review in accordance with subsection (g)(7)b and only upon motion properly brought forth by a duly authorized member of the board.



f. Any claimed injury to the mind or emotional well-being of an individual shall not serve as basis for a finding that the injury satisfies the criteria of section 1(A) but shall be presumed to be governed by existing provisions regarding non-catastrophic injuries. Any such presumption shall be considered rebuttable.

g. The provisions of this Ordinance Amendment shall be retroactive to 1986.

**SECTION 2.**

That all ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

**SECTION 3.**

If any provision, clause, sentence or paragraph of this Code, or the application thereof to any person or circumstances, shall be held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect the other provisions or application of the provisions of this Article which can be given effect without the invalid provisions or application and, to this end, the provisions of this Code are hereby declared to be severable.

A true copy,

*Rhonda Daughin Johnson*  
Municipal Clerk, CMO

ADOPTED as amended by the Council  
APPROVED by the Mayor

SEP 17, 2001  
SEP 25, 2001

01-C-0976

(Do Not Write Above This Line)

AN ORDINANCE

BY COUNCILMEMBER

MICHAEL J. BOND

TO AMEND SECTION 6-222 OF THE CITY OF ATLANTA'S CODE OF ORDINANCES RELATED LAWS SECTION (1978 PENSION ACT) BY REPEALING EXISTING PROVISIONS GOVERNING POLICE PENSION BOARD POLICY ON EMPLOYMENT RESTRICTIONS FOR PENSIONED OFFICERS SEVERELY INJURED IN THE LINE OF DUTY AND SUBSTITUTING IN LIEU THEREOF THE ARTICLE CONTAINED HEREIN; TO REPEAL CONFLICTING ORDINANCES; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

ADOPTED BY

SEP 17 2001

- ☐ CONSENT REFER  
☐ REGULAR REPORT REFER  
☐ ADVERTISE & REFER  
☒ 1st ADOPT 2nd READ & REFER  
☒ PERSONAL PAPER REFER

Date Referred

6/18/01

Referred To:

Finance / Executive

Date Referred

7/2/01

Referred To:

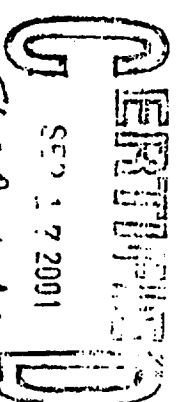
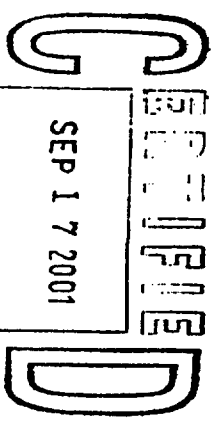
Finance / Executive

First Reading

FINAL COUNCIL ACTION

- ☒ 2nd ☐ 1st & 2nd ☐ 3rd  
Readings  
☐ Consent ☐ V Voice ☒ FRC Vote

CERTIFIED



MAYOR'S ACTION

APPROVED

SEP 25 2001

MAYOR

RCS# 6688  
5/16/05  
2:48 PM

Atlanta City Council

Regular Session

03-O-0313

AMEND PENSION LAW FIREFIGHTERS INCREASE  
MONTHLY PEN BENFIT DISABLED LINE OF DUTY  
ADOPT AS AMEND

YEAS: 12  
NAYS: 0  
ABSTENTIONS: 0  
NOT VOTING: 2  
EXCUSED: 1  
ABSENT 1

Y Smith	Y Archibong	Y Moore	Y Mitchell
Y Starnes	B Fauver	Y Martin	Y Norwood
E Young	Y Shook	Y Maddox	NV Willis
Y Winslow	Y Muller	Y Sheperd	NV Borders

03-O-0313

